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## Navajo Nation and State of Utah Working together for Utah-Navajos

**Salt Lake City, UT.** — The 6<sup>th</sup> annual 2011 Utah Native American Tribal Leaders Summit, on August 31, engaged President Shelly, Utah Governor Gary R. Herbert, and Lt. Governor Greg Bell in conversations to enhance services to Utah Tribal members.

In his state of the tribe address, President Shelly mentioned the need for quality health care, infrastructure development, job creation, and supporting the growth of businesses.

The fact is the Navajo Nation is not a constitutional government. The Navajo Nation does operate with three policies: the tribal code, fundamental law, and the federal policy. Due to federal policy, a government-to-government relationship exists between the state of Utah and the Navajo Nation.

“As partners, the Navajo Nation and the state of Utah can create new jobs in energy, both renewable and non-renewables,” said President Shelly. “We must invest in our youth and we must invest in technology.”

“The Utah Native American Tribal Leaders Summit is to engage more with the Native American government,” said Gov. Herbert. “The success of what we have tomorrow will be a result of us working together. It is the collected wisdom that will help us find solutions for issues we face.”

With the federal government making budget cuts, funding for a lot of projects, divisions, departments, and institutions on the Navajo Nation were underfunded. Included in the budget cut, are housing entities.

“We cannot build a home for every tribal member so we need to create solutions,” said Shelly.

Solutions include, giving Navajos off and on the Navajo Nation the opportunity to thrive in trades-related education, colleges and universities, growth of businesses within the Utah area and throughout the Navajo Nation, creating jobs with the development of renewable and reusable energy.

To help the state of Utah accomplish these goals, Congress needs to appoint a trustee. Utah Navajos need trust fund revenues to provide services to the beneficiaries, like scholarships.

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“Let’s make sure we have good educational opportunities because that is what the job market is demanding,” said Gov. Herbert. “The high school diploma is no longer as adequate as it use to be.”

President Shelly recognizes that collateralized land and having a Navajo Nation owned bank would help the people build homes and businesses on the Navajo Nation. With the Navajo Nation being the landlord for itself, the Navajo bank can lend money to Navajos who want to purchase land, homes, and businesses. If someone should default on their loan, the loan would transfer to another family member or the land and house will become the property of the Navajo Nation, who can sell it to eligible individuals.

“The time to wait is gone,” said President Shelly. “We can’t rely on our federal budget. We will create solutions.”

“We are looking forward to this,” said Gov. Herbert. “We need to keep in mind three principles: communication, teamwork, and vision.”

The seven Utah tribes who attended were the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute, Navajo Nation, Northwestern Band of Shoshone, Pauite Tribe, Skull Valley Band of Goshute, Ute Tribe of Uintah Ouray, and the White Mesa Ute/Ute Mountain tribes.

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